

CIACO

NID 81 [REDACTED]

September 18, 1981

SPECIAL ANALYSES

POLAND: Prospects for Confrontation

The Intelligence Community has sensed a qualitative change in the attitudes of Solidarity and the Polish Communist Party. The former has directly challenged the authority of the Polish party and, indirectly, Soviet hegemony in Eastern Europe. The latter has indicated a determination to confront Solidarity's challenges if necessary with the use of force. [REDACTED]

The Polish regime is deeply disturbed by the outcome of the initial phase of the Solidarity Congress. For the first time it appears determined to confront Solidarity in order to prevent a further erosion of its authority and to employ force if the union refuses to back off. [REDACTED]

At its congress, Solidarity issued a set of new and more pointed challenges to party control within Poland and released a statement that inferentially calls into question Soviet hegemony in Eastern Europe. Solidarity asked for a referendum on worker self-management of enterprises, appealed for free elections to the Polish parliament, called for public control of the mass media, and issued a letter supporting free trade union activity in the USSR and Eastern Europe. [REDACTED]

The government has interpreted Solidarity's line as a challenge to its political primacy. It recognizes, however, that the somewhat disorganized nature of the first phase of the congress was conducive to extreme statements and positions which brought to light divisions within the union. The regime probably hopes to exploit some of these divisions in order to effect a change in the union's posture, preferably before the opening on 26 September of the second phase of the congress. [REDACTED]

The Polish regime has drawn up a detailed plan of military measures, including curfews, shows of force, total military control of the country, and arrest of [REDACTED]

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Solidarity leaders. The Polish leadership appears to be readying itself for the possible employment of at least some of these measures in the near future:

- The regime seems to have come to doubt the possibility of reaching an acceptable modus vivendi with Solidarity radicals.
- The regime is considering declaring Solidarity an illegal organization unless it disavows its appeal to Soviet and East European workers.
- A televised Politburo statement on Wednesday accused Solidarity of challenging "vital interests" of the Polish nation and pledged that the government would "use for its defense such means as are required by the situation" to stop the union from taking a course leading to a "confrontation threatening bloodshed." [REDACTED]

The Soviets have interpreted the positions taken by Solidarity at its congress as a frontal challenge to Communist authority not only in Poland but throughout Eastern Europe. They have accused extremist elements in Solidarity of trying to seize political power and have orchestrated factory protest meetings in the USSR and in some East European countries. [REDACTED]

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Both the Soviets and the Polish Government have retained some flexibility by concentrating their criticism on extremists within Solidarity. The televised government statement indicates that the regime still hopes to isolate without violence those unspecified Solidarity leaders whom it labels "political madmen," but it is prepared to use force if necessary. [REDACTED]

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The Polish leadership is undoubtedly aware of the risks involved in a direct confrontation. It cannot be completely confident of the reaction of the population or of the loyalty of the military rank and file. [REDACTED]

Even though the regime probably would try to use a carefully modulated initial show of force, it must realize that an abortive limited showdown might inexorably lead to an escalation of violence that could quickly get out of control and precipitate Soviet military intervention--all eventualities which it would like to avoid. [REDACTED]

Even though there are currently no indications of an immutable government plan of action, nor of any alerting of units, the government and Solidarity, by their separate activities, have created a situation in which the dynamics point to confrontation. For the government, the combination of its televised statement and the scheduled reconvening of the Solidarity congress on 26 September intensify the pressure to assert itself and not back down as it has in the past. [REDACTED]

The chances of a confrontation leading to the regime's use of force have risen considerably unless the more moderate elements in Solidarity manage to tone down those union actions most objectionable to the government. [REDACTED]